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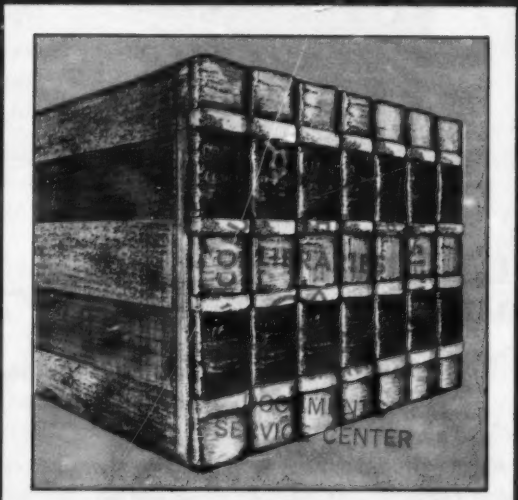

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EASTERN STATES OFFICE
JUNE 1985

LAND RECORDS: WHERE THEY CAME FROM, HOW WE GOT THEM

As the United States expanded westward from the Thirteen Original Colonies, Congress recognized the need for an orderly system of surveying and describing the Federal lands that would be opened to settlement. The Ordinance of 1785 established the rectangular survey system and authorized the Treasury Board to sell public lands for revenue. The General Land Office (GLO) was established within the Treasury Department in 1812 to take charge of all survey and land title records. GLO became part of the newly-created Department of the Interior in 1849, and was merged with the U.S. Grazing Service in 1946 to form the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM took custody of the land records, which have since grown to include some 7.5 million ownership titles covering 1.5 billion acres of present or former public domain land. Over five million of these title documents are stored and maintained at BLM's Eastern States Office in Alexandria, Virginia.

WHAT RECORDS WE MAINTAIN

The first land records to develop from the Ordinance of 1785 were survey field notes. Government surveys began in Ohio and progressed westward as more territory was opened up for settlement. Survey field notes are prepared by the surveyor; they describe the survey performed, and may include the names of settlers living in the survey area and a variety of descriptions of land formations, climate, soil, and plant and animal life. Survey *plats* are drawings of the boundaries created by each survey. Plats are prepared by draftsmen who base their drawings on information in the field notes and sketches. The earliest survey records date back to the 18th century; records produced today still follow the same basic format.

Once the public domain was surveyed, the government could begin to transfer title of land parcels to private citizens, companies and local governments. Most titles are transferred through patents (deeds) granted by the Federal Government. Records of these patents and other statements of title—such as railroad grants, swamp grants, school grants, Indian allotments, and private land claims—are contained in tract books. First developed around 1800 and maintained in the local land offices, tract books still serve as the essential reference source for all transactions involving public lands. They tell who obtained what land from the Federal Government, and when. The Eastern States Office maintains the tract books for the 13 public land States under its jurisdiction: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

IF WE'VE GOT IT, YOU CAN GET IT

Every month, the Eastern States Office furnishes certified photostat copies of hundreds of patents. Most requests for copies come from title attorneys and abstract companies who, before they insure title on a particular parcel of land, want to make sure the Federal Government no longer owns it. Individuals and firms involved in mineral exploration and development find these records essential in ascertaining whether mineral rights were reserved to the Federal Government when the United States conveyed title to the land. A large proportion of requests come from the Southern States, where the burning of county courthouses during the Civil War caused the loss of many title records. The records are also of value in historical research.

If you specify the legal description of the parcel or parcels, BLM's records staff can locate the patent and supply you with a copy. The legal description should include the subdivision, section, township, range, survey meridian, and State. The name of the landowner alone is not sufficient, since the land records of most States are not indexed by name.

IT COSTS, OF COURSE

Fees are not high, but the public is charged for copy work and time spent by our staff on records research. If you expect to make numerous requests for research and photostat copies, we encourage you to establish an advance deposit account. Since regulations require that payment be received before the requested material is sent out, an advance deposit account will greatly expedite your order. Any sum is sufficient to establish an account. When we receive your order, we deduct the fee from your account balance and furnish, along with the material you ordered, a receipt showing the number of copies and what you've paid for them. Soon afterward, you'll also receive an automated statement showing your adjusted balance. Your orders will be filled for as long as the account holds sufficient funds to cover their cost, or until you cancel the account. In the event you place an order and the cost exceeds the amount remaining in your account, we'll send you a notice showing the cost of your current order and the additional amount required for us to complete it.

In addition to copywork fees, you may apply against your deposit account the cost of other subscription-type orders, such as the Eastern States Office's bi-monthly list of lands available under the Simultanious Oil and Gas Leasing System (often called the "oil and gas lottery"), as well as the list of drawing results.

Mail your orders, inquiries, or application to open an advance deposit account to this address:

Bureau of Land Management
Eastern States Office
350 South Pickett Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

COPYWORK AND SEARCH CHARGES

PROCESS OR SERVICE	PRICE
PHOTOSTAT COPIES	
1. Patents	$12.00 each
2. State Grants, Swamp and Railroad Conveyances, etc.	$12.00 each
Note: $12.00 reflects costs for search, certification and copy fees.	
3. Tract Book Pages	$4.00 each
4. Survey Plats	$4.00 each
5. Field Notes	$4.00 1st page $1.00 each add'l. page located in same volume.
6. Case File Records	$0.25 per page
MICROFILM	
1. Duplicate Copy	$20.00 per roll
2. Negative from original documents	$150.00 per roll

Please include your complete name, telephone number and address with each request. Remember to specify the *complete legal description*, including subdivision (such as NE¼NE¼), section, township (North or South), range (East or West), survey meridian, State, county and other pertinent information.

REFUNDS

Refunds of less than $1.00 will not be made unless specifically requested.

READEX FICHE

APPLICATION TO OPEN ADVANCE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT WITH THE EASTERN STATES OFFICE

Enclosed is an initial deposit in the amount shown below. Please open an Advance Deposit Account in the name shown and allow the persons indicated to draw on this account. I understand that copies cannot be provided without payment in advance, and that the Eastern States Office will notify me if at any time the balance in the account is insufficient to cover the cost of my order.

$_____ Initial Deposit

Names of persons authorized to order from the account:

_____

_____

_____

Name and address of firm or individual in whose name account is to be listed:

_____

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Signature

DETACH HERE

EVEN IF WE DON'T HAVE IT, SOMEONE ELSE WILL

Because the Thirteen Original Colonies and their territories were not a part of the Federal lands acquired during national expansion, we do not maintain the land records of 18 eastern non-public lands States or the District of Columbia. These States are Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Inquiries concerning land records for these States should be directed to the individual State archives or land record offices. It may also be worth your while to contact county offices and/or the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

Patents for lands in the Western States are maintained by BLM's eleven western offices:

Arizona:
Arizona State Office
3707 North 7th Street,
P.O. Box 16563
Phoenix, AZ 85011

Alaska:
Alaska State Office
701 C Street, Box 13
Anchorage, AK 99513

California:
California State Office
Federal Office Bldg.,
Room E-2841
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Colorado:
Colorado State Office
2020 Arapahoe Street
Denver, CO 80205

Idaho:
Idaho State Office
3380 Americana Terrace
Boise, ID 83706

Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota:
Montana State Office
Granite Tower, P.O. Box 36800
222 N. 32nd Street
Billings, MT 59107

Nevada:
Nevada State Office
Federal Building,
Room 3008
300 Booth Street,
P.O. Box 12000
Reno, NV 89520

New Mexico, Oklahoma:
New Mexico State Office
Joseph M. Montoya Federal Bldg.
South Federal Place,
P.O. Box 1449
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Oregon, Washington:
Oregon State Office
825 N.E. Multnomah Street
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208

Utah:
Utah State Office
324 South State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Wyoming, Kansas, Nebraska:
Wyoming State Office
2515 Warren Ave.
P.O. Box 1828
Cheyenne, WY 82003

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for the people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

An agency of the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for the administration of the public lands and their various resources. BLM's role is defined by the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*, which established the policy that the public lands will be retained under Federal ownership and managed in the public interest under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. BLM administers some 357 million acres of public lands—approximately 175 million acres in the lower 48 states and 182 million acres in Alaska—amounting to about one-fifth of the Nation's total land base. Through the sale of oil and gas leases, grazing rights, timber, minerals, and other raw materials and energy sources, the public lands are a substantial source of income to the Federal Treasury. The economy of many communities—particularly in the West—is based on activities stemming from the sale or lease of these resources.

EASTERN STATES OFFICE

BLM programs in the 31 states adjoining or east of the Mississippi River are the responsibility of BLM's Eastern States Office, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia. Public lands under BLM jurisdiction in the East amount to some 60,000 acres of surface (located primarily in the States of Minnesota, Louisiana and Florida); approximately 2,800 islands; approximately 33 million acres of Federal Mineral Ownership underlying private surface, State lands, and Federal surface under the jurisdiction of other Federal agencies such as the Forest Service or the Department of Defense; and an undetermined quantity of public land, mostly adjoining rivers and coastlines, that were omitted from original surveys.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Eastern States Office
350 South Pickett Street
Alexandria, Va. 22304

OFFICIAL BUSINESS